DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 198 572 CS 503 194

AUTHOR Grossberg, Lawrence
TITLE Intersubjectivity and the Conceptualization of Communication.
PUB DATE May 80
NOTE 38p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association (30th, Acapulco, Mexico, May 18-23, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Communication (Thought Transfer); *Concept Formation; Interaction; Interpersonal Competence; Semiotics; *Speech Communication
IDENTIFIERS *Intersubjectivity

ABSTRACT

Treating views of communication through consideration of contrasting conceptions of intersubjectivity is possible because the two domains are articulated in different terms and are at the same time closely identified. There are three images of intersubjectivity that reflect the dominant ways in which the dichotomy of the individual and the social has been conceived and reconciled: (1) as absolutely separated, independent terms brought together; (2) as terms existing in interaction with one another; (3) or as terms in a hierarchical relation of constitution. Each of these images presents three different ways of asking the question of how communication is possible. Two alternative answers to each of the three forms of the question of communication generate six discrete views within which the transcendence of the individuality of meaning in communication is accounted for. (HOD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED198572

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

INTERSUBJECTIVITY AND THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF COMMUNICATION

Lawrence Grossberg

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Lawrence Grossberg

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Mr. Grossberg is an Assistant Professor of Speech Communication at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I would like to thank Jesse G. Delia for his assistance in the preparation of this manuscript.

CS503194

Intersubjectivity and the Conceptualization of Communication

Even the most cursory glance at the wide range of literature using the concept of "communication" demonstrates that there is little agreement on how to define the term or on its relationship to other categories of human action and experience. Within the discipline of communication study, it is by now commonly acknowledged that there are fundamentally different ways of describing and accounting for communication. While such discussions most often have focused on the differences between particular theories or on epistemological issues, there has been some interest in identifying different philosophical attitudes animating significantly different theories of communication.[1] The task, however, has not yet been approached systematically. In the present article, I will seek to identify a number of significantly distinct ways of describing communication which have, to varying degrees, entered into and affected our theoretical positions. Often, the failure to see these differences has meant that important similarities and differences among research programs have gone unnoticed.

In order to talk about alternative views of communication, I must operate with a framework which captures actual theories of communication, yet which provides analytical distance from those positions. The schema I will employ toward this end is built upon the concept of "intersubjectivity." Treating views of communication through consideration of contrasting conceptions of intersubjectivity is possible and fruitful precisely because the two domains--intersubjectivity and communication--are articulated in different terms and at the same time, closely identified. The terms of this identification may vary but, at the very least, both are taken to be addressing similar fundamental questions. For example, in a recent critique of communication theory, Rommetveit has argued against the

common identification of communication with "perfect intersubjectivity," but rather than radically challenging the identification, he suggests that communication is, at best, the achievement of "partial intersubjectivity": "we must, naively and unreflectively, take the possibility of perfect intersubjectivity for granted in order to achieve partial intersubjectivity in real-life discourse with our fellow men."[2]

The relationship between intersubjectivity and communication can be located in the fact that both raise the question of how the individual is, in some way, transcended. Intersubjective relations are not describable merely as interactions or relations among individuals. An intersubjective relationship--it can be called "understanding," the "We-relation," etc.--involves a structure in which individuality is escaped. Hence, the framework of intersubjectivity is an inherently dualistic one, for it sets up the opposition and relation of the individual and the social. Similarly, communication is not merely a form of social interaction between individuals; it involves something more--i.e., understanding. It is also the means through which the individual enters into and exists within the social world. Hence, it is quite natural to locate communication and the various ways in which it has been questioned and described within the context of the question of intersubjectivity: the status of and relationship between the individual and the social.

As the account of intersubjectivity changes, we should be able to identify significant differences in the possibilities for describing communication. Consequently, I will proceed by identifying three images of intersubjectivity.[3] These three images occur because the question of intersubjectivity is articulated in terms of a bipolar relationship. There are two terms involved--the individual and the social--and as one changes the nature of the relationship between them, their meaning and status is altered as well, thereby changing the very meaning of intersubjectivity. The three images of intersubjectivity to be considered

reflect the dominant ways in which the dichotomy of the individual and the social has been conceived and reconciled: as absolutely separated, independent terms brought together; as terms existing in interaction with one another; or as terms in a hierarchical relation of constitution. Each of these three images, in turn, leads to a particular formulation of the question of communication. In raising the matter of "the question of communication," I am suggesting that any particular set of terms which offers a viewpoint on the nature of communication reflects a presumed way of asking the question of how it is possible that the "individuality" of meaning may be transcended in a relation of "understanding." The three dominant images of intersubjectivity will be seen as giving rise to three different ways of asking the question of how communication is possible. Each question inevitably limits and defines the appropriate vocabularies or frameworks within which it may be answered. However, the bipolarity of the question--individual/social--means that each question allows two answers, depending on which pole is given primacy. The result of our analysis, therefore, will be a six-fold schema of views of communication.[4]

I must emphasize at the outset, however, that the six views of be discussed are not offered as theories of communication, even in some idealized form. They are vocabularies or conceptual frameworks that are available to us in the articulation of our accounts and theories of communication. Furthermore, the relations among the alternative views is not merely one of opposition; since different questions are addressed, communication is treated in fundamentally different terms. Consequently, the relations between these six views and concrete communication theories is quite complex and will not be addressed in the present essay. Rather, my object is to distinguish and describe, at a basic level, the various "perspectives" on communication that are available to use as a resource in constructing theories of communication. In articulating this schema of views, the three images of intersubjectivity will serve as the major organizing dimension.

Within each of the sections, the image of intersubjectivity will be outlined first; this will be followed by a discussion of the resulting "question of communication," and finally two alternative views of communication which serve as potential answers to that particular question will be summarized.

INTERSUBJECTIVITY AND COMMUNICATION I

Intersubjectivity as "Coming Together"

Let us turn, then, to the first image of intersubjectivity. This first image might best be described as "coming together," for intersubjectivity is seen as involving the bringing together of essentially opposed terms. In this image, the question of the relationship between the individual and the social is addressed within an explicitly dualistic metaphysics. Both the individual and the social are taken as distinct categories of existents. The individual is a unique and isolated entity, generally characterized in terms of its essential subjectivity; it is a knowing, self-conscious mind existing with (-in) but irretrievably distanced from both other subjects and the social world. On the other hand, the social is described in essentially objective terms, as a shared, ubiquitous and intractable reality standing against the individual. Hence, the question of intersubjectivity raises the need to bring the two terms together, to build some bridge or connection between these two disparate realms of existence (or to eliminate one of the terms via some sort of reduction).

Intersubjectivity is, thus, construed on the image of some state or moment in which there is a link between the indiviudal and the social, allowing them to come together. These links are often described in terms of processes of internalization and externalization, a spatial metaphor which results from the metaphysical separation of the individual and social domains. The image of intersubjectivity as coming together results as well in a particular description of social interaction and life in terms of a collection of individuals existing with, but radically isolated from, each other.

Communication and the Question of Sharing

If we begin with the position that indiviudals are essentially separated from one another, then the question of the possibility of transcending the individuality of meaning is a very real one. If the meanings to be communicated belong in some essential way to the isolated subject--isolated from others in both his physical and psychic-imaginative life--one seems to be inevitably in a position of viewing meanings as "private." The question of communication must be seen in terms of the need to free meaning from the subject in some way by allowing meanings to be "shared." The image of intersubjectivity as coming together, in which the individual is essentially a subjective entity (consciousness), seems to inevitably raise the "egocentric predicament" in which we are seen as prisoners of our indiviudal, isolated minds. The question of communication involves the nature of the connections which enable us to escape the "egocentric predicament," making it possible for us to hold meanings in common. Thus, the question of communication is asked in terms of the possibility of our sharing meanings.

The possibility of sharing subjective meanings requires either that we reduce subjective meanings to objective entities or that there be some medium through which we can connect with others. The social provides the objective possibility of bridging the absolute gap between individuals. If sharing is to be accounted for, meaning must be located in this objective (i.e., stable and public) realm of the social as well as in the individual. This is the function of the concept of the sign, for it gives stability and objectivity (identifiability and repeatability) to particular meanings which would otherwise be individualized and unkowable by the other. Insofar as a sign involves a real (i.e., nonsubjectively constituted) social connection between a material vehicle and a meaning, the meaning is present and available to any number of subjects, even though they are metaphysically isolated. Communication is a process of exchange through an objective social medium; this objective social medium

is necessitated by a particular view of the subject and achieved by assuming the social objectivity of the sign (i.e., by assuming a particular view of the social imbedded within the operation of signification systems). Consequently, the question of communication as sharing (between individuals) is only sensible and answerable within the context of an image of intersubjectivity as a coming together of the individual and the social.

Two Views of Communication as Sharing

It is obvious that the question of sharing has provided the dominant framework within which we most commonly attempt to describe communication: communication involves a sharing or exchange of meanings among subjects through some medium or sign-system. Such views have generally been referred to as "linear" or "transmission" views. However, even within the terms of the question of sharing, there is room for significant disagreement; if communication achieves some state of shared meaning, then variations will depend upon how one describes the entity which is shared and through which the isolated subjects are brought together in a moment of understanding. That is, the possible views of communication that can be articulated within the question of sharing will be defined by the issue of the nature of meaning in general, and of shared meaning in particular. Since sharing is a particular expression of the image of intersubjectivity as coming together, the various views of communication can be organized in terms of the polarity of subjectivity/objectivity which is itself responsible for the image of coming together. Thus, we may speak of objective and subjective linear views of communication.[5]

An objective view of communication gives meaning a status independent of the consciousness of the subject. This is not merely to say that meanings are located within publically available signs, for if the meaning ultimately refers to something located within individual consciousness, then its status is not inherently objective. That is, in addition to the public availability of meaning in signs (or behavior), an objective view maintains that the very nature of

meaning can be explicated without reference to consciousness. For example, if meaning itself is explicated as nothing but behavior (or patterns of behavior), then communication is described as a specific instance of the more general processes of learning (and, hence, persuasion). This is commonly referred to as an "effects" model. On the other hand, if meaning is taken to be information, then its objectivity lies in the real world which it refers to or represents. On such a model, communication is described as the sharing of information or knowledge and it is accounted for as an achievement which requires the elimination of all subjective interpretations or inputs from the information itself. This "realist" model of communication is analogous to a commonly held view of perception; we normally think that perception is problematic only because of the unfortunate subjective distortion of the information given to the senses from the external world. Similarly, communication is achieved only when we can avoid or counteract the distortion of subjective prejudices, preconceptions, uses, etc., in order to arrive at a sharing of the meaning--the objective (as well as objectively contained) information. The attractiveness of an objective linear view is due, in part, to the fact that it opens up the study of communication to quantitative analysis, with research programs built upon the observation, measurement and testing of meaning and communication.

A subjective linear view of communication, or the other hand, is attractive precisely because it seems so obvious and commonsensical. Such a view assumes that meanings are ultimately describable only as nonlinguistic entities that are the "private" property of individual subjects, located within consciousness. Communication is still described, essentially, as a sharing or transmission of meaning, but meanings lead us into the domain of subjective entities. Communication involves trying to make the other person understand (share) what you mean (i.e. what is "inside your head"). Obviously, such a view of communication seems to embrace the "egocentric predicament," rather than following the objective view's reduction of the subjectivity of meaning.

However, precisely because it remains faithful to our apparent experience of meaning and communication, the possibility of communication is a particularly difficult issue. The subjective view appeals to the already socially shared sign systems as the media through which such an exchange is possible. The sign, however, must be characterized in terms of a tripartite structure: a material vehicle, a subjective or individualized meaning and a conventional meaning, inherent in the sign which can be made present and available to others. For example, in Ogden and Richard's analysis, a sign, while referring to a "mental" significance on the one hand, is also characterized by its indirect reference to the real world.[6] Thus, within a subjective view, the sign must recreate the coming together of the individual and the social in order to account for the sharing of meaning among individuals.

Recently, numerous variations on such linear views have been proposed (e.g., allowing language to influence subjective meaning, or describing communication as "transactional" rather than as a linear transmission process). However, such modifications fail either to radically rewrite the basic question of communication as one of sharing, or to escape the limits which a vocabulary of sharing imposes on our accounts of communication itself.

INTERSUBJECTIVITY AND COMMUNICATION II

Intersubjectivity as "Belonging With"

The first image of intersubjectivity was built upon the assumption that the individual and the social have radically different natures and, hence, stand opposed and isolated from one another. The second image, however, rejects this metaphysics. While this second view also is dualistic, and treats the individual and the social as distinct terms, this second image begins with the assumption that the two domains are constantly and necessarily involved with each other. That is, although each has a distinct and independent nature, the individual and the social exist only in the context of their interaction.[7] Thus, this second

image of intersubjectivity can be glossed by the phrase, "belonging with."

The question of our social existence is no longer raised in terms of connections among entities and domains irreconciliably distanced from one another. Rather, individuals are seen as constantly related to and interacting with other individuals within the context of the social. And the very nature and possibility of the individual's interactions is defined by the relationship between the individual and the context within which the individual lives out their life. Accounting for intersubjectivity does not involve us in a project of building bridges; rather, intersubjectivity is the process of the continual reaffirmation of our social nature, of the fact that our individuality and subjectivity is dependent upon and interwoven with our existence within an ongoing context of social reality.

Obviously, the understanding of the individual and the social has changed significantly from the first image of intersubjectivity. The subject is no longer seen as an isolated mind but rather, as an actor engaged in interactions with other subjects and with the environment. No longer the absolute origin and locus of meaning, the subject is now the active and practical agent who serves as both initiator of and respondant to particular and concrete actions. The subject is not isolated from other subjects but exists instead always and already located within a field of active agents who are already related to one another and constantly engaged in processes of interaction amongst themselves.

But such concrete interactions always occur within an already existing context of relations; it is this context that defines the social in this second image of intersubjectivity. This context is not reducible to individuals or their actions; it is the already present structure of social relations within which the individuals are constantly living our their lives. That is, at any particular moment, it is a structure of stability and trans-individuality. This stability can be conceptualized in a number of different ways: as a structure of intersubjective meanings, as a conventionalized structure of

of historical forms of relations, or as an ongoing process in which individuals are able to escape their own individuality in a moment of intersubjective empathy, attunement, or negotiation. Regardless of the particular form however, this context of the social remains as a given through which individuals are able to interact with each other.

However, the above descriptions are, to some extent, inadequate for, if the individual and the social have discrete and separable natures, their natures are also inherently interwoven with each other. Thus, while the social has its own stability and its own possibilities for change, it nevertheless exists only insofar as it is continuously reaffirmed by the subject in particular interactions. Similarly, the nature of the subject must be understood in terms of a relation to the context of social reality. The individual is responsible for both the continued existence of the social context as well as for its continuous development and change. While continuing to exist outside of social reality as an origin of intentions and actions, the subject simultaneously exists within the social context as a competent social actor. That competence is defined by the social context and it is that stability which allows the subject to act in ways which reaffirm and change the social context itself.

It should be clear that we are dealing with a very different image of intersubjectivity, an image of the individual belonging with the social in a constant interaction in which both are constantly given stability and constantly changed. Rather than describing intersubjectivity in terms of the connections between objective and subjective domains, it is seen as involving on ongoing process of development (change, emergence) within an already existing context of relationship. Intersubjectivity involves directed and meaningful processes of development and change; it is a continuous interaction of the individual and the social, a continuous emergence of creativity within a context of tradition.[8] It is a process of the continuous decontextualization of acts from a given context and their recontextualization into an altered reality of

intersubjectivity. Consequently, the question of intersubjectivity--the relation of the individual and the social--is seen in terms of the polarity of contextuality/decontextuality.

Communication and the Question of Emergence

This changed image of intersubjectivity suggests a different question of communication as well. In order to understand this second question of communication, let me begin by discussing meaning within the terms of the second image of intersubjectivity. On the one hand, meanings seem to exist only in particular and concretely (spatially, temporally, socially and subjectively) located acts. And yet, the meaning of a particular act seems to be repeatable and rephraseable; it seems to survive the ephemerality of the event or interaction. In fact, it may come to have meanings that could not possibly have belonged to it at the moment of the event. Thus, although we might reasonably argue that a particular act or message means what it does only within its original context, the act or message seems to clearly continue to exist as meaning what it does outside of that (and perhaps, of any specifiable) particular context.[9] Meaning is capable of a decontextualized existence and this constitutes the possibility of tradition, conventions, codes, etc. Thus, we must also say that meanings exist--and must exist--outside of a particular context as potentially available. But this decontextualized meaning is, of course, contextualized in its own way. It exists only within the codes, structures, rules of usage, etc. that define the social context (e.g., language). When we bring meanings into particular contexts, we enhance and enrich their significance and our possibilities. New meanings emerge and enter into the already articulated social context. We are able to creatively use the stock of contextualized (social) meanings and escape the limits that those contexts impose upon us by recontextualizing them. Thus, we can say things that have never been said before, but we cannot say anything.

Consequently, the question of communication--of the possibility of intersubjective meanings--is asked in terms of the ongoing emergence (development

and articulation) of intersubjective meanings within an already constituted context of intersubjective meanings. Understanding is the emergent product of interactions among subjects located within a constantly rearticulated system of intersubjective relations and meanings. That is, individuals are seen as already existing in a social realm insofar as they are already located within a system of intersubjective meanings. Privacy and sharedness are no longer central to an understanding of communication because the possibility of individual meaning is already related to that individual's existence within the social context. The question of communication is defined in terms of the emergence of meaning out of individual interactions within an ongoing social context.

Communication is, then, an ongoing contextualized process of interaction in which intersubjective meaning (and understanding) emerges from the relationship of the individual interaction and the social context. As I have said, these terms--individual and social--can be neither radically separated nor identified. The context of social reality has a stability into which the actor must enter if interactions are to be possible, but the actor has an existence apart from that context, an existence which makes creativity and change inevitable. Within these terms, communication is easily seen as the very process of ongoing social life, of the reconciliation in interaction of tradition and creativity (understood historically), or structure and process (understood sychronically). By beginning with a system of relations within which individuals engage in creative and inherently social activities, the question of communication is one of contextualization and emergence rather than of exchange. The question of communication is not that of accounting for sharing as an achievement of individuals but rather, of describing the relations between individuals as a continuous immersion within and transcendence of an ongoing context of intersubjective meaning. Communication itself is seen as the very context within which we exist as social creatures, and yet it assumes the presence of the individuals within an already defined context

of possibilities of relations and intersubjective meaning. Consequently, in such views, communication is located in an always and already ongoing context of a communication-community. The understanding which linear views of communication see as an achievement is, rather, the continuous recreation and change of our common social reality. It is both the original given context within which meanings exist to be appropriated by individuals and the process by which that appropriation renews and changes that context. The question of sharing is undermined by an appeal to a context of meaning in which we already find ourselves in relations, as socialized into a community. The new question of communication, which I have labelled "emergence," is asked in terms of the interinvolvement of creativity and tradition, of act and structure.

Two Views of Communication as Emergence

The particular views of communication that arise from the question of emergence depend upon whether one begins with the context of intersubjectivity from which new meanings emerge or with the processes of emergence which constantly reaffirm the presence of such a context. That is, answers to the question of emergence can be divided according to whether they begin with structures or acts. The former, which I will call a "structural" view of communication, animates much of the recent interest in semiotics and social rule theories; the latter, which I will call an "interactional" view of communication, has found expression in the growing interest in symbolic interactionism and speech act theory.[10]

The structural view of communication focuses on a description of the intersubjective context within which particular communicative events take place. Further, it describes this context (our belonging with others in a community) in terms of general and stable structures (codes, sets of rules, etc.) which pre-exist and constitute the possibility of concrete interactions. Particular events of communication are the expression of the structure within which they are articulated. The uniqueness and appropriateness of a message is the result of the structure's being competently used, that is, of the particular selection

manifested at that moment. While communication is always an act, it is defined by the structured context within which it functions.

Within such a view, communication is our continued existence within a structure which has already established us in a context of intersubjective meanings. We are able to communicate only because we exist as potential communicators and that potentiality is the expression of our already existing in a relation with others, i.e. within a common structure.[11] That common structure or code is self-sufficient and objectively describable. Communication does not involve our using sign systems to share something outside of the signs themselves; rather, it is the continuous reaffirmation of the sign system itself and of that which has already been constituted--our existence as members of the sign-system community.

Thus, the success of communication is to be located within the structure itself; it does not demand appeal to something outside of the structure such as subjective meanings or objective information. Meaning is, if you like, the product of the structure itself. Understanding is not something we bring to or from a message; in fact, it is not something outside of the structure at all. It is precisely that we already co-exist with others within the structure. To understand a message is not to bring something to or take something away from it but rather, to continue using the structure itself in appropriate ways.[12]

If the communicative event is constituted by the concrete presence of a structure within which we already exist with others, then the task of communication theory is to identify the operation of this generalized structure. Whether the structure is described as a system of generative recursive rules, a pattern of relations among signs, or an empirically observable pattern of normal relations among messages, the basic view of communication remains the same: it is a particular manifestation of a structure which has already located the actors within a community, and hence, in a universe of intersubjective meaning.[13]

However, one can also approach the question of emergence by focusing on the ongoing actions of the actors within the social context, actions through which meanings are appropriated and emerge. That is, the context within which we belong with others is seen not as a given and stable structure, but as a continuous process of change. While this context is still the locus of the possibility and emergence of intersubjective meaning and understanding, it is itself seen in terms of the ongoing and concrete interactions among the members of the community. Rather than addressing the issue of a structure which is brought into and used in particular communicative interactions, it is these interactions themselves which become the central issue. The interactions themselves are seen as defining and constituting the continuous existence of the community, and giving rise to what appear as stable structures.

This interactional view, thus, appeals only to the concrete giveness and emergence of intersubjective meaning within concrete, situated interactions. Individuals, by virtue of already being located within a community, exist in the context of interactions in which they are involved. Communication is described as an ongoing series of active engagements between individuals who already belong with each other in the community constituted by those ongoing interactions. The interaction is itself the site of intersubjective meaning, both as given and as emergent. It is the concrete communicative interaction which makes present at every moment our continued existence within a context of intersubjectivity. However, that context of intersubjective meaning has little stability; it is constantly emerging and hence, potentially, constantly changing. What we take to be social reality, including the structures themselves, is the emergent product of these concrete encounters with others; hence, social structures (codes, rules, etc.) exist only as they are reaffirmed through and within interaction. Communication is the process of the social reconstruction or rearticulation of reality within our interactions; it is the ongoing interactional production of understanding (intersubjective meanings.)

Obviously, any particular interaction takes place in the context of the ongoing history of such engagements. This notion of the historical context of interactions, however, is not equivalent to a given structure of intersubjective meaning. Rather, the very meaning of that history is constantly being produced and changed in every new interaction. Nevertheless, the appeal to history is necessary in order to account for the fact that, prior to any particular interaction, the actors must already belong with each other in a community. That is, each member brings to the encounter an historically produced context of intersubjectivity, and that context reemerges, perhaps in a changed form, from the interaction.

If interactions are themselves the source and ground of an ongoing emergence of intersubjectivity, then such relations between subjects must clearly have a special status. This is often described by calling such communicative interactions "dialogic." Thus, within an interactional view, communicative interactions are themselves the context of intersubjectivity.. They are not describable solely within the terms of the individual actors, for it is in the special and unique relation of actors in "dialogue" that each is able to transcend individuality to find co-existence with another in an intersubjective world. That is, it is only within such interactions that our social existence is possible or has reality. Consequently, an interactional view of communication reduces the question of the relationship of the individual and the social to that of the relations among individuals. The question of intersubjectivity is answerable only be answering the question of communication, since it is in communication, as an ongoing context of dialogic interactions, that the possibility of social reality is given.

INTERSUBJECTIVITY AND COMMUNICATION III

Intersubjectivity as "Sociality"

The third image of intersubjectivity is built upon a phenomenological turn: the question of the reality of the domains of the individual and the social is put aside in favor of a consideration of the processes by which their experienced reality is created and maintained. The question of intersubjectivity becomes that of accounting for our experience of the world in terms of self and other, individual and social. This image of intersubjectivity is appropriately labeled "sociality," for it makes no metaphysical claims; the question is one of constitution rather than metaphysics or real genesis. The question of intersubjectivity no longer involves a description of the status of and relation between the individual and the social but rather, concerns the sense of intersubjectivity within our lives.

According to this image of intersubjectivity, what is given is that we are constantly acting and involved in the world in such a way as to see that world as social and ourselves as individuals, individuals separated from and related to each other and the social world. The question of intersubjectivity is not what intersubjectivity is or how it is possible, but rather, how it is accomplished or produced. For the fact is that we do seem to continuously accomplish this, we do seem to maintain a sense of the individual and the social in relation to each other. This is accomplished in the very processes, practices or actions that we are constantly engaged in, practices that define our humanness in the mundane living of everyday life.[14] Hence, it is the practices of our everyday living, the events of our acting in the world which are the crucial starting point; it is through these that we are able to constitute and affirm ourselves both as social creatures living in a social world and as individuals radically isolated from others. We act in ways that not only suggest that we live in a shared world, but that constitute the sense of that sharedness as well.

Our practices sustain the belief--perhaps an illusion but certainly a necessary one--that we live together as individuals in a stable, shared, social world, as well as our experience of ourselves as individuals within that social world.

Intersubjectivity, then, is an accomplishment of our concrete practices; what it is that such practices accomplish is precisely to make it reasonable and possible to continue acting in the ways we do--as particular individuals living in a particular social world. The problem is to describe how these practices function so as to create and maintain the sense of a social world, not only for ourselves as actors but for others as well, others with whom we are constantly interacting through such practices. The question of intersubjectivity becomes the question of how our practices accomplish that interaction and accomplish it in particular ways, ways that traditionally have been described in the two previous images of intersubjectivity: we act with others who are like us; we act in a world that appears stable and available to others as well as to ourselves; we make sense of our actions and of the actions of others and others make sense of their own actions and of our actions; and the sense we make of all of this seems to be quite orderly, nonidiosyncratic, and socially shared. The image of sociality leads us away from the attempt to account for the possibility or creation of this state of affairs; rather, it demands an account of the concrete ways in which we manage, accomplish and maintain--for ourselves and others--this view of the world and of our experience of it.

The image of intersubjectivity as sociality--as an ongoing accomplishment--can be explicated using the phenomenological notions of immanence and transcendence, and of constitution. I have, throughout the discussion above, described the questions of intersubjectivity and communication in terms of the idea of some kind of transcendence, but previous views have taken this to involve a question of reality rather than of the structure of experience. Given that there are certain processes or practices present (immanent) within our experience,

phenomenologically the question of intersubjectivity is one of how these processes and practices are able to constitute the apparent reality of things that transcend our experience. For example, if one assumes that the immanent can be described in terms of individual meaning-processes, then we must ask how such processes can constitute a sense of a shared world (social meanings), a world which transcends our individual experiences. On the other hand, if the immanence of experience is described as a set of interactions or engagements with the other, how do we come to constitute (in this case, to separate out) both ourselves and a social world as realities that transcend that immediate engagement.[15] The image of sociality is the question of the nature of the "given" or immanence of human experience and the possibility of constituting a sense of transcendence. It leads us into an investigation of the concrete and contextual processes and practices that define us as individuals existing within a community.

Communication and The Question of Interpretive Constitution

In the two previous questions of communication, the issue was essentially how individual meanings can be transcended into a relationship of understanding, characterizable in terms of the presence of shared or intersubjective meanings. The image of sociality brings about two significant changes in the way we question communication: first, the reality of the two terms is replaced by a concern for the ongoing sense of their reality within experience. Second, the notion of constitution problematizes the direction of the transcendence. That is, is it understanding that transcends individuality or individuality that transcends understanding? Such changes have, I believe, radical implications for our articulation of the question of communication, for we are now concerned with the processes by which both individual and social meanings appear as real within our experience. Obviously, communication is seen as an ongoing accomplishment, realized through a set of practices; and it is these practices through which we make sense of ourselves and others in interaction that are to be analyzed.

The question of communication is how certain processes serve to constitute our experience in terms of a relationship between individual and social meaning; that is, how certain processes interpret our interactions as an ongoing attempt to reconcile the individuality of meaning and the possibility of a relationship of understanding. Thus, the question of communication, in this image of intersubjectivity, may be described as one of "interpretive constitution."

This description of the question suggests that, through communication, we interpret our existence in terms of a continuous process of relating our individual meanings to those of others within the context of an already meaningful social world. Of course, this is not to make any claims about the reality of indiviudal or social meanings; rather, it is just because certain of our practices in our everyday life accomplish this interpretive constitution that we make sense of ourselves as creative subjects in a social context. Communication involves a set of ongoing processes that constitute our existence in both individual and social domains of meaning, and it is this constitution or accomplishment that must be questioned. Instead of questioning communication as if it were a real achievement of sharedness or emergence of intersubjective meaning, the question of interpretive constitution directs our concern to the production, in communication, of the sense of intersubjectivity as a relation of individual and social meanings.

Thus, although this last question of communication breaks the identification of communication and (real) intersubjectivity, the connection is maintained, for we are now concerned with communication as the ongoing constitution of sociality (the sense of intersubjectivity). This last question of communication, then, begins by problematizing the reality of intersubjective meaning and by locating it within the more general process of interpretive constitution; and in so doing, it invites exploration of the ways in which the sense of intersubjectivity itself is accomplished in the practices of communication in everyday life.

Two Views of Communication as Interpretive Constitution

There are two major views of communication that respond to the question of interpretive constitution. The difference between these views can be understood in terms of what each takes to be the immanent structure of human experience and hence, what it is that must be constituted as transcendent. That is to say, the two views differ over the relationship between the constitutive practices and the accomplishment of intersubjectivity. In a "phenomenological" view of communication, these interpretive practices belong to the individual; consequently, the individuality of meaning is taken as given and understanding (and intersubjectivity) is only an imputed or constituted accomplishment. Such a view, then, radically challenges the "reality" of communication, for it is only an apsect and accomplishment of the individual engaged in public and routinized performances of coordinated actions.[16] On the other hand, a "hermeneutic" view of communication starts with the giveness of understanding in experience which is itself responsible for the sense of that experience as intersubjective, i.e., as involving a relationship between the individual and the social. Here the sense of understanding as a relationship of individual and social meanings, and hence, the experience of the reality of both of these domains, is seen to be the ongoing accomplishment of the "event of understanding." That event, embodied within communicative practices, is describable in neither individual nor social terms, for it is the event itself which is constitutive of the sense of both individuality and sociality. It is in understanding that we come to see ourselves as individuals living in a social world.[17]

A phenomenological view of communication begins with the primacy of the individual subject, but the description of the subject is significantly different from that in a subjective view. The individual is not an isolated consciousness but, on the contrary, is an organism constantly related and oriented to its environment. Consequently, the meaningfulness of the individual subject's experience is not describable in terms of some collection of meanings created

by and located within the mind. Rather, the subject is constantly engaged in processes of attempting to relate to the world and to others; and meanings are constituted in this continuous process by which the subject makes sense of and acts in the world. The phenomenological view, then, is interested in those processes by which individuals are able to engage the world in meaningful and directed ways; a phenomenological view focuses on the ways in which the subject is able to act in the world by organizing and making sense of it in particular and structured ways. The phenomenologist examines the modes by which we interpret the world and our engagements in it.

Insofar as these individual modes of relating to the world are the constitutive source of meaning and stability, the result is that the category of intersubjectivity is radically questioned. The reality of the social, i.e., the achievement or presence of intersubjectivity, is describable only in terms of the accomplishment of individuals acting in the world in ways that appear to coordinate with the actions of others. Hence, intersubjectivity is always and only an imputed intersubjectivity, an intersubjectivity constituted by the ongoing interpretive processes of individuals. What we achieve in coordinated action is not some transcendent intersubjective meaning, but a sense of intersubjectivity. There is no ground of intersubjectivity constituting the individual, nor is there any possible appeal to some moment in which individuals are able to transcend their own interpretive processes. Hence, it appears that communication is not the domain of intersubjectivity as much as it is the domain within which we are able to create for ourselves the ongoing assumption of intersubjectivity. The problem of communication is that of our interpreting the actions of others within a context, and that context has already been constituted by our perception of the need to coordinate lines of action in order to accomplish some individual project.

However, the phenomenological view of communication is not complete at this point, for the question of how we manage to accomplish a coordinated sense of

intersubjectivity (or of communication) remains unanswered. Without addressing this, we find ourselves in a new form of solipsism, in which intersubjectivity is a belief that is accomplished through individual modes of relating interpretively to the environment. To answer this question, we must remember that, phenomenologically, the individual is not merely described in terms of cognitive operations, for he is also actively and constantly engaged with the world. Furthermore, the relationship between "modes of cognizing" and situated actions is not a simple, linear, or casual one. Action is as interpretive as are the more obvious psychological processes by which we make sense of our experiences. Our actions in the world are in fact practices by which we make sense of the world as we are acting within and upon it. Consequently, we can describe the constitution of intersubjectivity in terms of the practical and situated management of interpretive practices. The accomplishment of the sense of intersubjectivity is the constitutive product of our public performance: we act in ways which are themselves constitutive of the sense of the social. Notice that the objectivity of the social or of intersubjectivity has been replaced now with the public availablity of particular practices or modes of acting and coordinating action. Intersubjectivity, then, is not merely an imputation constituted in individual perspectives and intentions; it is also the very character of the practices as "routinized" by which we attempt to coordinate our projects with the other. Thus, a full investigation of communication involves us as well in an examination of the social organization of interpretive practices. While these practices originate in an individual perspective, they have a social and public character. The individual is involved in a constant process of coordination and the strategic manipulation and management of such practices in his concrete performances; consequently, communication is constituted as well by the possibilities and implications of the routine practices available to us. However, to refer to them as routine is not to suggest that they exist as codes or conventions, for such objective or

intersubjective realities as these latter terms suggest are themselves only the product or achievement of our coordinated actions through the management of routinized practices. That is, the sense of the actuality of such practices is an accomplishment of our ongoing and successful situated management of sense-making practices.

Nevertheless, the notion of routine practices does introduce a real tension into the phenomenological view and allows for significant disagreements, depending upon whether priority is given to cognitive or praxical interpretive processes, to individual perspectives or public performances. Yet even those who would place the greater burden on social practices give them only a limited objectivity; they are routinized practices that are available to and used by individuals, and they are ultimately constituted as the public performance of individual interpretive strategies. That is, a phenomenological view does not see sense-making practices as prior to or constitutive of the individual.[18] Communication is an accomplishment of individuals: the situated performance of individuals, engaged in a reciprocal coordination of perspectives (or communicative intentions) through the practical management of socially available practices.

The second view of communication which responds to the question of interpretive constitution is the "hermeneutic" view. If a phenomenological view problematizes intersubjectivity by challenging the reality of understanding and hence, communication, a hermeneutic view begins by reaffirming both the identification and giveness of communication and understanding. In fact, such a view makes their giveness constitutive of intersubjectivity (i.e., of the sense of the individual and the social) and, hence, of all that is essentially human. Understanding is taken to be the immanent moment or event of human existence, an event within which both the individual and social are constituted as existing in a continuously changing relationship. Communication is, then, not an individual project. It is not merely a purposive activity,

whether that purpose is to create shared meanings or to coordinate lines of action. Nor is it a tool or set of practices available to competent subjects for the production of a social reality, relationship or intersubjective meaning. It is not reducible to the individual, nor is it the domain of social meanings that transcends the individuals. It is, rather, the essential movement of human existence such that individual and social, creativity and tradition are reciprocally constituted. It is the given of our existence within an historical community, "a living process in which a community of life is lived out."[19] Thus, a hermeneutic view speaks of the "a priori" of communication,[20] for it is only within the context of the ongoing events of communication that individual and social are made present as related to one another. It is only within the "a priori" of communication that intersubjectivity is constituted, i.e., that the individual and the social appear to have a status which transcends the event of communication. The reality of the domains of the individual and the social (i.e., their transcendence) is, hence, only affirmed in terms of their immanence within the event of communication in which they appear as mutually constitutive. While there is a reality and continuity of the social within which the individual is located, there is also an alienation of the individual from the social. While our existence as an individual is defined by our being located within the social, the reality of that social domain is itself constituted in the moment of communication. Hence, our individuality is not merely an immediate and unquestioning extension of our sociality. Individuality is constituted within sociality precisely as something distanced from it. Similarly, the social is constituted only in its apparent distance from the individual. In this reciprocal constitution of the individual and the social in the "transcendental"[21] moment of communication, each is made present as existing independently of the other and of the particular moment as well (i.e., as transcendent). For any moment of understanding is constituted as an interpretation of something said; it is always a "fusion of horizons."[22] Those horizons are necessarily differentiated,

but that differentiation occurs only within the context of their prior identification.

In all communication, there already exists a tradition (social meaning, community); communication is precisely the individual's reclaiming of the tradition by making it his own. That is, tradition exists only by our appropriating it and hence, creatively making it present in understanding. And by appropriating it, the individual is made present as a subject who has a unique position vis a vis other subjects and tradition. It is in the communicative event that meaning is both always and already there and yet, always and already forthcoming.

The subject that is constituted in the hermeneutic event of communication is, however, not the concrete and psychological subject that has concerned earlier views. It is not the subject as a particular entity or as having any particular perspective that is constituted; it is rather the subject as essentially a perspective on tradition that is constituted in the event of communication. It is, one might say, a rather context-free view of the subject; it is precisely an attempt to describe the subject solely as an essentially constituted moment in the event of communication. The subject neither shares the meanings of others nor produces meanings with others; nor does the subject strategically manipulate communicative practices to create a sense of such achievements. The subject mediates meaning into his or her own horizon.

Communication is, then, a process of bringing meaning (tradition, social meaning) into the individual's life, but the mediation is itself constitutive of both individuality and sociality. While affirming the gap between the individual and the other (subject/tradition), it is the space of this gap that is the productive locus of communication, a space constituted as a series of mediations of one horizon on meaning-structure into another. In this space, understanding is concretized as meaning; it is constantly made present as an individualization of the social. Yet, in this event, the other functions to

shape and define the individual precisely because he or she appropriates it as their own. The individual is both alienated from and embedded within the social; yet, both the individual and the social exist only within their mutual disclosure in the moment of communication. The horizons which are mediated into one another in the moment of communication are constituted and have reality only in that moment of mediation, a moment in which they call each other forth.

Thus, the horizons which define the individual and the social are fluid and changing, rather than fixed and permanent. There is no stable intersubjective meaning or social reality standing against a stable subject. Each exists and finds a momentary stability only in its continuous concretization in the communicative event, in the continuous "happening" of communication in which tradition is mediated to the individual as both are reciprocally constituted. Tradition or social meaning is constantly changing as it is defined by its history of being taken up by individuals, just as individuals are defined by the history of their appropriations of tradition. Communication opens up a shared, fluid world which is constantly changing as its meanings are "played further" in concrete events of communication. Creativity and tradition are merely the two constitutive movements of the moment of communication itself.

Communication, as a momentary but continuous occurrence, is thus the immanent context within which intersubjectivity is itself constituted (i.e., in which the stable presence of both the individual and the social is announced). Yet it is also the context of the historicality of existence which gives to each a certain instability. Communication is the essential moment of our existence as human, a transcendental (constitutive) moment within which we locate ourselves as creative and unique individuals existing with others in a context of a socio-historical world. It is only in the moment of communication, then, that we exist as human, as simultaneously individualized and socialized, as both immanent and transcendent beings. A hermeneutic view sees communication as a concrete event within which our existence is grounded and constituted.

CONCLUSION

"Communication" has become central in many contemporary accounts of human institutions, actions and creative products. George A. Miller has recently written in this regard, for instance, that " in the imaginary matrix of problems-by-disciplines, the row devoted to [communication] would have contributions in almost every column."[23] There is a respectable and growing literature concerned with communication theory, and the call for "conceptual clarity and rigor" in communication theorizing is by now trite.

Nevertheless, "communication" has remained a largely unexamined concept, unexamined at least with the tools of critical philosophy. There has been little rigorous philosophical or conceptual analysis of communication comparable to the efforts of the philosophy of meaning, language, art, etc. or to the philosophical analyses of concepts such as "action."[24] Part of the task of a "philosophy of communication" involves providing a meta-theoretical language[25] with which we can analyze and compare alternative theories and research programs. This article is an attempt to provide an initial statement toward such a conceptual analysis.

But there is a second project involved in a "philosophy of communication": to radically question the nature of communication and our assumptions about it. That is, a "philosophy of communication" ought to raise questions such as what is it that is to be studied? What is the meaning of the term such that it has some parameters circumscribing it? What is its relationship to other concepts, such as intersubjectivity and understanding? Is communication (as either concept or experience) derivable from more basic ones or is it a unique domain which is given within experience, postulated within our theory? The specifically radical nature of philosophical reflections will depend upon one's philosophical inclinations, upon the roots to which one tries to return.

In general, there are two ways in which the project of a radical questioning of our assumptions about communication (or other concepts) might proceed. The

first is commonly described as "phenomenological" and it takes us back to some experiential root. That is, phenomenological reflection attempts to recover and describe the "originative phenomenon," leading us back to the experience of communication within the "life-world." Philosophy returns and grounds science in "the dynamics of the lived-through experience,"[26] that is, in an experience which is meaningful prior to any attempts to objectify, conceptualize and talk about it.

The second way of philosophical reflection, "critical semiotics," focuses instead on the ways in which we have objectified, conceptualized and talked about "communication." Rather than trying to "strip away" such interpretations in order to recuperate the lived experience of communication prior to any interpretation or some "originary" meaning of the experience,[27] critical semiotics examines the interpretations themselves (in the various vocabularies we have to talk it). It provides a reading of the various ways in which we have "made sense" of communication. Rather than seeking some origin behind our talk--some unstructured or uninterpreted experience--semiotics seeks to understand the ways in which this supposed origin has been questioned and described. But the reading does not end there; it continues in order to locate some common, underlying question(s).[28] This "problematic of communication" raises questions, not about the life-model, but about the particular paradoxical structures inherent in our ways of understanding our existence, a particular discursive or conceptual opposition. A semiotic philosophy of communication is radical, not in its return to the roots of experience, but in its return to the context within which the concept of communication functions, a context that is defined not only intellectually but also in sociopolitical terms. Thus, a philosophy of communication will address the question of the "transcendental status" of communication itself, both in contemporary life and contemporary thought. Seen against the projection of such further projects for any philosophy of communication, the present essay perhaps can better be seen as only a beginning.

Notes

1. Such work has led to a variety of distinctions between types of theories: e.g., linear/structural-rule/processual; positivist/interpretive; encoder/decoder/message-centered. The best example of epistemological concerns in the communication theory literature is provided by the two issues (devoted to the question, "What criteria should be used to judge the admissability of evidence to support theoretical propositions regarding communication research?") of Western States Speech Communication Journal, 41 (Winter 1977) and 42 (Winter 1978). The concern with the philosophical ground of a particular position is illustrated by Leonard C. Hawes, "Elements of a Model for Communication Processes," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 59 (1973), 11-21; and Stanley Deetz, "Words Without Things: Towards a Social Phenomenology of Language," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 59 (1973), 40-51. Examples of comparative philosophical studies are John Stewart "Concepts of Language and Meaning: A Comparative Study," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 58 (1972), 123-33; and Richard L. Lanigan, "Communication Models in Philosophy: Review and Commentary," in Communication Yearbook 3, ed. Dan Nimmo (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1979), pp. 29-49. Lanigan's article, as well as Lee Thayer, "On the Limits of Communication: A Metaphilosophical Inquiry," Philosophica, 16 (1975), pp. 99-111, both attempt to provide some philosophical definition of the concept of communication, but in neither one is the choice of categories justified or explicated independently of the concept of communication itself.

2. Ragnar Rommetveit, "On Negative Rationalism in Scholarly Studies of Verbal Communication and Dynamic Residuals in the Construction of Human Intersubjectivity," in The Social Contexts of Methods, eds. Michael Brenner, Peter Marsh and Marylin Brenner (London: Croom Helm, 1978), p. 31.

3. The three images are meant to represent, in a general way, the major approaches to "social reality" within contemporary social theory. However, I do not mean to suggest that they can be directly referred to specific, concrete positions embodying them. Nevertheless, loosely speaking, the first image can be associated with the debate between Durkhein and Weber: See Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action, (New York: Free Press, 1937). The second image can be associated with George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self and Society, (1934; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1962) and Claude Levi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology, vol. 1, (Garden City: Anchor, 1967). The third image is related to the phenomenological movement in social theory: see Alfred Schutz, The Phenomenology of the Social World, trans. George Walsh and Frederick Lehnert (Evanston: Northwestern Univ., 1967); and Peter Berger and Stanley Pullberg, "Reification and the Sociological Critique of Consciousness," History and Theory, 4 (1965), 196-211.

4. The present schema is built upon that proposed in Lawrence Grossberg, "Language and Theorizing in the Human Sciences," in Studies in Symbolic Interaction, Volume 2, ed. Norman K. Denzin (Greenwich: J.A.I. Press, 1979), pp. 189-231. However, there are two significant differences. First, I have changed the organizing dimensions in order to be able to deal with communication. Second, the last two views of the present typology do not correspond exactly with Grossberg's.

5. A position in which the "vocabulary" of an objective linear view is obvious is that of David Berlo, The Process of Communication, (New York: Holt, 1960). The subjective linear view is primarily reflective of the assumptions about communication commonly and naively held. In fact, Swanson and Delia label this view as the "folklore of talk." See David L. Swanson and Jesse G. Delia, The Nature of Human Communication, (Chicago: SRA, 1976). Further discussion and critiques of the subjective view can be found in Franklin Fearing, "Toward a Psychological

Theory of Human Communication," Journal of Personality, 22 (1953), 71-88; and C. David Mortensen, Communication: The Study of Human Interaction, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), ch. 1.

6. C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards, The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language Upon Thought and the Science of Symbolism, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1923), pp.9-13.

7. The image of "belonging with" is thus meant to raise the question of mutual and partial constitution; that is, of a relation in which each of the terms is both determined and determining since each has an essential nature which can be defined outside of the context of the relation. The problem of describing such a relationship is closely tied to the problem of dialectics, at least in one of its forms. See Lawrence Grossberg, "Marxist Dialectics and Rhetorical Criticism," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 65 (1979), forthcoming. How can one describe a situation in which differentiated terms come to exist in and constitute a relation which transcends their individuality while at the same time, their identity transcends those constitutive relations.

8. I do not mean to suggest that signs have a "literal" meaning; the most common solution to this problem is to assert that the sign has multiple meanings.

10. The vocabulary of a structural view finds expression in a wide range of theories, including interaction analysis (see Hawes), and rules models [see Robert E. Nofsinger, Jr. "The Demand Ticket: A Conversational Device for Getting the Floor," Speech Monographs, 42 (1975), 1-9.] Such a view is generally dominant in sociolinguistic research. See, e.g. Malcolm Coulthard, The Analysis of Discourse, (London: Longman, 1977). For a general discussion, see David D. Clarke, "The Structuralist Analysis of Communication: an Example of Problem-Centred Methodology," in The Social Contexts of Methods, eds. Michael Brenner,

Peter Marsh and Marylin Brenner (London: Croom Helm, 1978), pp. 172-83. The interactional view of communication is most obvious in the work of the symbolic interactionists: see Herbert Blumer, Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969), and in the notion of an "architecture of intersubjectivity," suggested by Ragnar Rommetveit, On Message Structure: A Framework for the Study of Language and Communication, (New York: Wiley, 1974). See also Berger and Pullberg.

11. See Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology, trans. Gayatra Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ., 1976) for a discussion of the continued assumption of a subject in the work of Saussure and Levi-Strauss. For in fact, such views need not deny that individuals have thoughts or meanings. It merely asserts that the possibility and significance of such "subjective" experiences are grounded in the structures.

12. For example, Leach writes,

> Such models of communication [i.e., all kinds of human action and not just speaking] include writing, musical performance, dancing, painting, singing, building, acting, curing, worshipping and so on. . . .at some level, the "mechanism" of these various modes of communication must be the same, that each is a transformation of every other in much the same sense as a written text is a transformation of speech. . . . we need a language in which to discuss the attributes of this common code.

Edmund Leach, Culture and Communication: The Logic By Which Symbols are Connected (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ., 1976), pp.15-16.

13. Notice that Quine's attack of linguistic relativism, contained in his theory of the indeterminacy of radical translation, is misplaced precisely because he fails to see that within a structural view, communication is no longer a sharing of meanings which have a reality apart from the communicative system and the competent user of that system. The question that his attack does point to is that of socialization, i.e., how does one become a competent user of the system?

See Willard Van Orman Quine, Word and Object (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T., 1960).

14. I shall use the terms "practice" and "event" in the discussion of sociality, since they are neutral with respect to the source or cause of that which occurs, unlike, e.g., action, which suggest an independent actor.

15. There are two other ways, logically, in which the individual and the social could be related that are not included in the present schema: within the image of sociality, one could create a position in which the social is the immanent context constitutive of the individual. Such a view of communication might be described as a "materialist semiotics." See Rosalind Coward and John Ellis, Language and Materialism: Developments in Semiology and the Theory of the Subject (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977); and Lawrence Grossberg, "The Philosophy of Discourse and the Status of Communication," unpublished manuscript, Urbana, 1979. The other possibility, pointed out to me by Bill Schroeder of the Dept. of Philosophy at the University of Illinois, involves a view of intersubjectivity as mutual constitution without the phenomenological reduction (i.e., as having metaphysical states), but I do not know of any successful articulation of such a position. This would seem, however, to have been Marx's goal.

16. I have used the term "coordinated action" to suggest a weaker bond than that suggested by "interaction."

17. The vocabulary of a phenomenological view is quite obviously evident in Harold Garfinkel, Studies in Ethnomethodology, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967); Aaron Cicourel, Cognitive Sociology, (New York: Macmillan, 1974) and Barbara J. O'Keefe, Jesse G Delia and Daniel J. O'Keefe, "Interaction Analysis and the Analysis of Interactional Organization," in Studies in Symbolic Interaction, vol. 3, ed. Norman K. Denzin (Greenwich: J.A.I., in press). The hermeneutic

view is apparent in Leonard C. Hawes, "Toward a Hermeneutic Phenomenology of Communication," Communication Quarterly, 25 (Summer 1977), 30-41.

18. Such a view is not not necessarily concerned with what is going on "in people's minds." Some recent work suggests the need to describe the relationship between individual perspective and situated performance in terms of a reciprocal constitution or reflexive organization. On such a view, communication might be described as a situated accomplishment constituted in the reflexivity of social practice and individual perspective. Such a view still need not assume the giveness of understanding and hence, seems to remain within a phenomenological view of communication. See Scott Jacobs and Charles J. Laufersweiler, "The Interactional Organization of Witnessing and Heckling: An Ethnographic Study of Rhetorical Discourse," unpublished manuscript, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1979. We might also locate the theory of communicative competence developed by Jurgen Habermas in this view depending on the status given to the ideal speech situation. See Jurgen Habermas, Communication and the Evolution of Society, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon, 1979).

19. Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method, (New York: Seabury, 1975), p. 404.

20. Karl-Otto Apel, "The A Priori of Communication and the Foundation of the Humanities," Man and World, 5 (1972), 3-37.

21. By "transcendental," I mean to suggest that which is the ground or the constitutive condition of all else. Therefore, the transcendental must always be assumed as given; it cannot be derived or grounded in anything else.

22. The term is Gadamer's. At this point, notice the similarity between the interactionist and the hermeneutic views; the latter, however, in order to totalize the constitutive process, finds itself forced into the domain of meaning opened up by the phenomenological turn in philosophy.

23. George A. Miller, "Problems of Communication," Daedalus, 106 (Fall 1977), p. 113.

24. There are obviously many examples of this kind of work: e.g., Charles Landesman, "The New Dualism in the Philosophy of Mind," Review of Metaphysics, 19 (1965); David K. Lewis, Convention: A Philosophical Study, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ., 1969); David E. Cooper, Philosophy and the Nature of Language, (London: Longman, 1973). In fact, philosophers often use the concept of communication as if it were nonproblematic to explicate concepts such as language. See e.g., John Lyons, Semantics, vol. 1, (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ., 1977), ch. 2.

25. Such a "meta-language," while providing a vocabulary in which to talk about the range of views, cannot claim a hierarchical relationship to those views.

26. Calvin O. Schrag, "A Phenomenological Perspective on Communication," paper delivered at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Philadelphia, Pa., 1979.

27. i.e., a meaning prior to any discursive articulation.

28. The underlying questions that a critical semiotic identifies, however, are not claimed to have any absolute status. That is, it is not a "deep level" of meaning or experience that is discovered by a hermeneutics of suspicion. Rather, it is a "reading" of the tradition of our reflections on communication in order to identify a level of assumptions that has never been problematized; of course, this reading is itself possible only from within some perspective and thus, it cannot claim any sort of philosophical neutrality.